DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 312 096 RC 017 215

AUTHOR Norman, Charles
TITLE Rural Revitalization through Collaboration.
SPONS AGENCY Kellogg Foundation, Battle Creek, Mich.
PUB DATE Feb 89
NOTE 11p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists (Nashville, TN, February 5-8, 1989).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Education; *Community Development; Cooperative Programs; Developmental Programs; Economic Development; *Institutional Cooperation; Pilot Projects; Rural Areas; Rural Development; *Rural Extension
IDENTIFIERS *Georgia; University of Georgia

ABSTRACT

In recent years, service programs targeted for Georgia's rural communities have decreased proportionately in relation to those intended for the state's rapidly expanding population centers. At the same time, erosion of traditional manufacturing industries and an adverse agricultural economy have decreased the ability of rural communities to provide basic human services. The University of Georgia's Rural Revitalization Initiative is focusing efforts on five rural development goals to be implemented in 12 counties through collaborations among university service units, statewide agencies and organizations, local agencies and governing bodies, and private citizens. Project goals include: (1) increasing the expertise and planning capabilities of local rural governments in the areas of finance, management, and planned growth; (2) developing at least four pilots in collaborative approaches to the delivery of human services, primarily in education, adult literacy, and health; (3) increasing "rural literacy" through educational programs for the general public that focus on rural heritage and rural community problem-solving; (4) fostering small business development and business retention in rural communities through training, counseling, and demonstration incubators; and (5) developing a series of training simulations for teaching longterm strategic planning to rural community leaders. The project seeks to link traditional and nontraditional resources of the University of Georgia in some innovative approaches to rural revitalization. Successful efforts will be replicated in rural communities across the state. (SV)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED312096

Rural Revitalization Through Collaboration

By

Charles Norman
University of Georgia
Cooperative Extension Service

RC017215

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Charles Norman

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Rural Revitalization Through Collaboration
(For presentation at the Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists annual meeting, Nashville, TN, February 5-8, 1989)

By: Charles Norman
University of Georgia
Cooperative Extension Service

In recent years, in the State of Georgia, the proportion of service programs targeted for rural communities has decreased in relation to the volume of requests from the expanding population centers of the nation's fifth-fastest growing state. At about the same time, the erosion of traditional manufacturing industries and the adverse economies of agriculture have decreased the ability of Georgia's rural communities to provide basic human services and prepare for the inevitability of rapid change in the Southeast.

Rural Georgia, similar to most of rural America, continues to offer the same opportunities for quality living, new economic enterprises, civic involvement and democratic stability which influenced the development of the nation through the first two centuries. The University of Georgia's Rural Revitalization Initiative is driven by the belief that the value of rural America can be preserved even as the economics and demographics of the region are changing.

The University of Georgia Rural Revitalization Initiative represents both a collaboration of service units at the University of Georgia and the collaboration of local people -- public and private -- across disciplines, professions, neighborhoods, and county lines. While each of the program areas addresses a major goal, each program has mutually supported

activities to address all of the goals. Our belief is that by practicing collaboration, we thus teach collaboration.

We have targeted 12 counties in the state to participate in the project. The counties represent both the best and the worst of rural Georgia: prime farmland with diminishing book value; an aging population tied to traditional economic systems; higher than average rates of illiteracy; infant mortality and morbidity and teen pregnancy; small communities finding it increasingly hard to provide basic services at an appropriate scale and technology for rural Americans; and a tendency not to move on which can only be explained by the local resident's love of place.

The Rural Revitalization Initiative is focusing efforts in the areas of governmental management, community development, rural heritage, economic development and training simulations.

The Initiative has five goals and various Service units are charged with implementing the goals collaboratively.

GOAL 1: To increase the level of expertise and long-range planning capability of local rural governments in the areas of finances, management and planned growth.

This goal will be addressed through training conducted by the Carl Vinson Institute of Government and the Georgia Center.

Governmental Management

Operating on the premise that if revitalization of rural Georgia is to occur, it will require commitment and support from local government elected official--mayors, council members and

county commissioners. With increased demand for public accountability, these elected officials will be forced to be more productive as governing boards and as individuals. They must be more skilled in both the work of politics and the practice of policy information. Meeting this leadership challenge requires stronger analytic skills, better strategic planning, improved communications and a strong "bottom line" orientation. In many cases, rural governments are not equipped to meet the challenge.

Through the University of Georgia Rural Revitalization Initiative, the governmental management component of the project will be working with county and municipal governments in twelve counties. Training and technical assistance opportunities will be offered in four areas: 1) Leadership development for elected officials which includes strategic planning, formulating policy, team-building and related topics: 2) Management development for supervisors which includes three intensive levels of training and special-topic workshops: 3) Financial management training and technical assistance: and 4) Land-use planning and zoning which includes a one-day regional workship on zoning regulations, minimum construction codes and infrastructure needs. In most cases, the training and assistance delivered through the Initiative are tailored to the specific needs of the selected municipalities and counties.

The agencies and organizations cooperating in serving the selected local governments are: Department of Community Affairs, Georgia Municipal Association, Association County Commissioners of Georgia, and local Area Planning and Development Commissions.

GOAL 2: To develop a minimum of four pilots in collaborative approaches to the delivery of human services, primarily in education, adult literacy and health.

This goal will be addressed by the Institute of Community and Area Development.

Community Development

The Institute of Community and Area Development (ICAD) will develop and implement four collaborative models that will focus on the delivery of human services in rural Georgia. These models will concentrate the energy and creativity of local, regional and state leadership on the development of innovative ways to address rural Georgia's complex needs related to health, education, job training, child care, housing, and special populations. In each model, local government, business, and community leaders will be brought to the table to set goals and design programs that can best serve the needs identified for their area. These groups will be encouraged to look beyond city and county boundaries and work with other leaders in their region in an effort to enhance the quality of life for all rural residents and to enrich the human capital necessary for long-term growth and prosperity. The collaborative processes used in each model will emphasize development of local talents and leadership and will establish local expertise that can assist the community beyond the period of the grant.

GOAL 3: To increase and improve "rural literacy" through a series of educational programs for the general public which focus upon the rural heritage, innovation and rural communities.

Rural Heritage

Representatives of the Cooperative Extension Service from observations and experiences in rural communities, sense that a key ingredient in revitalizing rural Georgia is to celebrate many of those historical values and events which built the character of America. Rural people need to remind themselves--and others--that there is much to be proud of in rural Georgia, the role of rural women in times of economic hardship, the collaborative spirit of the barn raising, the sport of rural politics, the contributions of blacks to building the rural South, the pleasure of rural music and folk arts, and other items of rural heritage.

Cooperative Extension will offer a series of seminars, attracting national figures who speak and write on the attributes of rural heritage, which will result in a series of publications and videos exploring both the historical and future benefits of rural Georgia. These publications and videos will receive a wide distribution through mass media, including regional magazines, newspapers, and public television and radio.

The Extension Service will also provide a shared educational experience for community and governmental leaders from several different communities in which they will learn and experience some of the more innovative approaches to rural community problem-solving. Typically, these experiences will involve

travel outside their community as a group to locations in our region where they can view and talk with people in other rural communities who are taking an innovative approach to some shared problem.

Community Media

We feel an important part of rebuilding rural communities depends upon community member's ability to communicate with each other. Local radio and newspapers have always played a critical role in that sense of community. Unfortunately, rural newspapers and radio stations rarely have the resources to provide experience and education for young staff in community history and development. We also find that few local media understand the range of economic and social policies which influence rural communities.

To assist in this area, The School of Journalism, along with the Extension Service, will provide local rural newspapers and radio stations with trainings in rural policy, rural heritage, local problem-solving, and community development. Additionally, we will produce a series of rural-focus columns and special interest features which talk about rural issues.

GOAL 4: To foster new approaches to economic development in rural communities which rely on developing internal capacity for small business development and business retention through education, counseling and demonstration incubators for new economic enterprises.

Economic Development

The Institute for Business Small Business Development Center will work in four communities. Communities were selected based on population size, location, and access to a regional office of the Small Business Development Center. "In each town, a steering committee of 7 to 12 leading citizens has been set up. A local coordinator acts as a liaison between the local community and the Institute for Business Small Business Development Center (IFB/SBDC)."

IFB/SBDC seeks to encourage economic growth in the four communities through small business development and business retention. Toward this end a wide variety of services are offered, these include: counseling, management training, a retail opportunities model, a loan fund, and small business incubators. The program, designed to develop local initiatives, will review community industries to develop other products, explore exporting possibilities, and access federal and state bids. Other parts of the program will address illiteracy and develop high school-based businesses.

Possible benefits for the four communities participating in the project include: more business and jobs; better managed businesses; better economic education programs in schools; an impact on illiteracy; new community projects; improved community leadership; increased sales through exporting, government contracts, and small business expansion; and increased tax revenues.

GOAL 5: To develop a series of training simulations for use in teaching long-term strategic planning to rural community leadership.

Training Simulations

The Georgia Center for Continuing Education will develop a simulation center which will provide an environment in which rural government officials and community leaders can try their hand at risky innovations in governmental services without losing money--or the election. We plan to build a portable simulation training system based upon computer technology and the best in management and planning simulation theory in business and industry and government. In either individual or group settings, local leaders can make decisions, react to natural disasters, face public crises and then see their actions played out over years--in a matter of minutes--with computer models. In addition, the simulations center can build human relation skills and group dynamics in a real-life setting of a simulated county courthouse. Components of the simulation center will be highly portable and can be incorporated in training programs in the most rural locations.

Leadership Development

Realizing the importance of leadership development, prior to the beginning of the programs in a County, if a leadership development program has not been conducted by service units at the University, then leadership development programs are conducted.

Management

The project involves not only major service units at the University of Georgia, but a number of statewide agencies and organizations to insure that we keep all service units and cooperating agencies and organizations informed about the project, a grant Management Council has been set up. The Council meets on a quarterly basis and involves representatives from the service units at the University and representatives from cooperating agencies and organizations. These meetings give those working on the project an opportunity to share ideas and resources.

Each of the service units working on the project are charged with the development and evaluation of their portion of the project and additional evaluation is being conducted using Michael Quinn Patton model to determine the success of the collaborative efforts between service units.

The Rural Revitalization Initiative is made possible through a three year grant from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. The grant provides an opportunity to try some different approaches to program development in the area of rural revitalization. Those programs that prove successful will be replicate in other rural communities across the state.

An underlying goal of the Rural Revitalization Initiative seeks to knit together a variety of resources at the University of Georgia--both traditional and non-traditional--to address current problems in economic, community and social development in rural Georgia.